

IN THE CLAIMS: Please cancel Claims 15 - 22 without prejudice, amend Claims 4, 9, and 10, and add Claims 23 - 28 as follows, illustrated in "clean" format:

AY ~~4. (Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 3, wherein said annular ring is welded to said first endplate.~~

AS 9. (Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 8, wherein said annular ring is welded to said second endplate.

AS 10. (Amended) The exhaust system converter of claim 8, wherein said mat support substantially covers said catalyst and said annular ring.

23. (New) The exhaust system converter of claim 1, wherein said mat support extends beyond a face of said catalyst.

24. (New) An exhaust system converter, comprising:  
a catalyst;  
a first endplate, positioned adjacent to a first end portion of said catalyst;  
a second endplate, positioned adjacent to a second end portion of said catalyst;  
a mat support substantially covering said catalyst, said mat support extending beyond a face of the catalyst; and  
a shell disposed around said catalyst and said mat support, and is disposed around and in intimate contact with at least a portion of said first endplate and said second endplate.

AG 25. (New) The exhaust system converter of claim 24, wherein said first endplate further comprises a first annular ring extending from a first endplate main portion and said second endplate comprises a second annular ring extending from a second endplate main portion.

26. (New) The exhaust system converter of claim 25, wherein said mat support substantially covers said first annular ring and said second annular ring.

27. (New) The exhaust system converter of claim 25, wherein said shell extends from a periphery of said first endplate main portion to a periphery of said second endplate main portion.

28. (New) The exhaust system converter of claim 27, wherein said shell extends from about halfway across said periphery of said first endplate to about halfway across said periphery of said second endplate.